

DATELINE: NO. 85 WHEATON, MARYLAND
ALINA ZERANSKI

JUNE 2, 1976

A RIDE INTO THE PAST

ANNCR: DATELINE: WHEATON, MARYLAND -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES -- BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK(AT THIS TIME). TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON A RIDE AMONG ROLLING HILLS ON PICTURESQUE CARS FROM A BYGONE ERA.

TAPE: CUT ONE: BELLS - SOME OF BOTH KINDS

VOICE: THE SOUND -- BELLS OF STREETCARS -- USED TO BE A FAMILIAR SOUND IN AMERICAN CITIES. HERE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THE TROLLEY ERA BEGAN WITH HORSE-DRAWN CARS DURING ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S PRESIDENCY. IT ENDED WITH THE FINAL RUN OF AN ELECTRIC STREETCAR DURING THE TERM OF JOHN F. KENNEDY. AS THE CITY GREW, SO DID ITS POPULATION -- AS DID THE NUMBER OF CARS THEY DROVE. THE TROLLEYS HAD TO GIVE WAY TO BUSES AND PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES. SOME PEOPLE, HOWEVER, LOOKED BACK WITH SADNESS TO THAT ERA. BUT THE OLD STREETCARS WERE GONE AND SOON FORGOTTEN. NOT BY EVERYONE, THOUGH: A GROUP OF CONCERNED CITIZENS ESTABLISHED THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TROLLEY MUSEUM IN WHEATON, A MARYLAND SUBURB OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- LAMB

"IN ABOUT 1959, A BUNCH OF FELLOWS GOT TOGETHER AND SAID THAT STREETCARS SHOULD BE PRESERVED. THEY WERE BEING REMOVED FROM THE CITIES, AND THAT WAS A FADING KIND OF TRANSPORTATION. THEY FELT THAT THE OLD STREETCARS, INSTEAD OF BEING DUMPED IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN OR CUT UP FOR JUNK AND SCRAP METAL, SHOULD BE SAVED SO THAT PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE COULD SEE AND RIDE AND FEEL AND ENJOY STREETCARS AS PEOPLE

TAPE: HAVE IN THE PAST. SO THEY WERE INCORPORATED IN 1959, AND
(CONT'D) IT TOOK ABOUT TEN YEARS BEFORE THEY ACTUALLY GOT THIS
MUSEUM OPEN."

VOICE: THIS WAS DR. ROSCOE LAMB, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MUSEUM.

IT WAS A BRIGHT SPRING MORNING IN THE WIDE COUNTRYSIDE OF
THE REGIONAL PARK IN WHEATON WHEN WE VISITED IT. THE
STAFF OF THE MUSEUM HAD JUST ARRIVED AND OPENED THE LITTLE
OLD-TIME RAILROAD STATION. THE MOTORCAR MAN TURNED ON THE
POWER AND PULLED AN ANTIQUE STREETCAR OUT OF THE BARN. IT
WAS FRIDAY, A SPECIAL SCHOOL DAY, AND EVERYTHING WAS READY
FOR THE BUS LOADS OF CHILDREN WHO HAD NEVER BEEN IN A
TROLLEY BEFORE.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- LAMB

"WE HAVE TWO LARGE CAR BARNs WHICH HOLD RIGHT NOW THIRTEEN
STREETCARS. THEY ARE CEMENT BLOCK STRUCTURES PAINTED BROWN
WITH THE USUAL SHINGLES. THEN ON THE TOP OF THE HILL, WE
HAVE A COMBINATION OF VISITORS' CENTER AND DISPLAY OF
MODEL TRAINS WHICH OPERATES ON SUNDAYS ONLY. IN THE STATION,
IN ADDITION TO OUR GIFT SHOP, WE HAVE A LARGE AUDITORIUM
WITH NUMEROUS COLORED AND BLACK AND WHITE PRINTS ON DISPLAY
OF THE STREETCARS, THE HISTORY OF STREETCARS. AND ON
OCCASIONS WE SHOW MOVIES OF TRAINS AND STREETCARS."

VOICE: FEW VISITORS TO THE TROLLEY MUSEUM CAN HIDE THEIR IMPATIENCE
WHEN THEY LEAVE THE AUDITORIUM. FOR THEIR FIRST RIDE ON
A STREETCAR FROM BYGONE TIMES... THE THRILL OF THE CLICKETY
CLACK OF THE WHEELS ON THE RAILS STARTS. ALL ABOARD! ...

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- BELLS THEN LAMB

"THE GROUNDS ARE PART OF THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK SYSTEM. WE HAVE MANY ACRESS OF ROLLING GRASS LANDS
WITH SOME TREES. ON OUR TRACK SYSTEM, WHICH IS A
SINGLE TRACK WITH A LOOP AT EACH END, A RIDE THAT A PERSON
GETS IS APPROXIMATELY TWO MILES."

VOICE: THE VISITORS CAN SEE HOW THE ELECTRIC CONTROLLER WORKS, HOW THE BRAKES WORK, HOW THE SAND IS THROWN ON THE TRACK IN CASE THE RAILS BECOME SLIPPERY. THEY WATCH THE CONDUCTOR PUNCH THE TICKETS. SOMETIMES HE LETS A CHILD PUNCH A FEW. AFTER THE RIDE EVERYBODY GOES TO SEE THE COLLECTION OF HISTORIC AMERICAN TROLLEYS AND LITTLE TRAMS FROM EUROPE. THEY RANGE FROM A FOUR WHEELED CAR OF THE GAY NINETIES TO A SHINY MODERN TROLLEY. MOST ARE BRIGHT RED, SOME CREAMY OR BLUE. SOME HAVE WOODEN BENCHES, OTHERS COMFORTABLE, LEATHER COVERED SEATS. SOMETIMES EVEN THE TWO CAR TROLLEY TRAIN FROM OLD VIENNA MAKES ITS APPEARANCE OUT ON THE RAILS.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- LAMB

"WE HAVE A CROSS SECTION OF THE CARS. THE EARLIEST CAR WE HAVE WAS BUILT IN 1898, AND IT HAS A PROFILE SOMEHOW LIKE AN OLD STAGECOACH. THE BODY OF THE CAR IS WIDER AT THE TOP THAN IT IS DOWN AT THE WHEELS. WE HAVE CARS FROM EUROPE, SMALL ONES THAT WE CALL SINGLE TRACK CARS WHICH ARE SOMEWHAT BUMPIER THAT THE DOUBLE TRACK CARS. SOME ARE DECORATED WITH STRIPED CURTAINS AFTER HAVING BEEN IN SERVICE IN A TOWN OF KARLSRUHE IN A FLOWER FESTIVAL. THEN WE HAVE GREAT BIG STREAMLINERS... WHICH ARE SMOOTH AND DELIGHTFUL, SOMEHOW SIMILAR TO THE METRO-LINER OR SUBWAYS OF WASHINGTON, D.C., TODAY."

VOICE: O
P
T THE MUSEUM NEVER RECEIVED ANY SUBSIDIES. AT FIRST THE MEMBERS, OVER A HUNDRED RAILROAD ENTHUSIASTS, GAVE PRIVATE LOANS. MOST OF THESE WERE PAID OFF BY NOW. ONCE THE CONSTRUCTION WAS COMPLETED, IT BECAME EASIER. / ABOUT

HALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION WHICH RUNS THE MUSEUM ALSO CONTRIBUTE THEIR TIME TO OPERATE THE MUSEUM. THEY ARE PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. DR. LAMB IS A PRACTICING DENTIST WHO JOINED THE CORPORATION AS SOON AS THE MUSEUM OPENED.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- LAMB

"EVERYBODY WHO WORKS OUT THERE WORKS FOR FREE. THAT IS THE WHOLE MUSEUM AND EVERYTHING THERE IS SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE. NO PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL OWNS ANYTHING OUT HERE... WE HAVE FREE USE OF THE LAND GRANTED TO US BY THE PARK SYSTEM. IN RETURN, WE HAVE BUILT AND OPERATE THE MUSEUM AT OUR EXPENSE... OF COURSE, WE ARE TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON FARES AND CASH DONATIONS."

VOICE: SPECIAL NEWSLETTERS ARE SENT TO ALL AREA SCHOOLS TO INVITE THE CHILDREN TO THE TROLLEY MUSEUM. OVER 20,000 VISITORS CAME LAST YEAR. ON A NICE SUMMER SUNDAY, UP TO 1000 PERSONS MAY SHOW UP TO TAKE A RIDE IN A COLORFUL AMERICAN OR EUROPEAN ANTIQUE TROLLEY.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE: WHEATON, MARYLAND -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, YOU HEARD ABOUT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TROLLEY MUSEUM. NEXT-----ANOTHER DATELINE.

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MAH/RCS